Theatrical Correſpondence in Death.

AN EPISTLE

FROM

Mrs. OLDFIELD, *in the Shades,*

TO

Mrs. BR---CEG---DLE.

[Price SIX-PENCE.]

6

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FROM

Mrs. OLDFIELD, *in the Shades*,

TO

Mrs. BR--CEG---DLE, *upon Earth*:

CONTAINING,

A DIALOGUE between the Moſt EMINENT PLAYERS in the Shades,

UPON

The Late STAGE DESERTION.

——————*Ridentem dicere verum*
Quis vetat?

LONDON:
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AN

EPISTLE

FROM

Mrs. OLDFIELD,

TO

Mrs. BR-----CEG-----DLE.

MADAM,

UPON my Return from drinking the Waters of *Helicon*, I determined *Charon* ſhould convey the incloſed.

Various are the Opinions of the Inhabitants of your Globe, concerning the State of us departed——One believes a Tranſmigration——Another Annihilation——The *Papiſts* Purgatory——The poor *Indian* an Eſtabliſhment in his own Country——But, as Finite cannot

not comprehend Infinite, all muſt reſt contented in their Ignorance. By this, however, Madam, you will find my Spirit has ſtill an Exiſtence, although my Body, which you knew laid by the *Great**, as well dead as living, has long ſince been no more.

Favourites on Earth, are Favourites in theſe Shades alſo——Your once admired *Wilks*, *Booth*, *Williams*, Mrs. *Heron* and others were drinking a Cup of *Nectar* with me laſt Week; the Diſcourſe turned on the late *Stage Deſertion*. In the Interim my beloved *Ch—rch—l* approached our Grotto, and join'd Company———We are ſeldom apart——— If Friendſhip on your ſide is held in high Eſteem, what, my dear *Br—ceg—dle*, muſt it be in theſe delightful Manſions, from whence Self-Love, Intereſt, and all your other earthly Foibles are baniſhed?

I cannot bear with Patience, began the *G—n—r—l*, that *Sing-Song* Girl there; notwithſtanding her Sex, I believe we may

* Mrs. *Oldfield* was buried in *Weſtminſter-Abbey*.

may juſtly ſay, ſhe is one of the chiefs of theſe *State Revolters*——*Dux Fœmina facti.*——Self-Sufficiency, and Self-Conceit, Sir, ſaid Mr. *Wilks*, with their natural Offspring Arrogance and Inſolence, are too often the Attendants on human Nature——Merit and Modeſty ſometimes fall Victims to their Power—I will not deny that Mrs. *C***** has Merit, very great Merit——For Heaven's ſake Mr. *Wilks*, replied the *G—n—l* ſharply, what is her Merit, when compared and put in the Scale, with that of many her Predeceſſors?—Here is my Charmer (taking Me by the Hand) for Inſtance ——Tell me I beſeech you, which of the Ladies appeared the beſt *Townly*?—Tell me what Figure the *Cobler's Wife*† would make in an *Indiana*, a *Jane Shore*, or any other of thoſe great Parts, in which an *Oldfield* once ſhined, with all the *Paraphanalia of a Lady of Quality*‡? In every high Character ſhe repreſented, did ſhe not ſeem the almoſt Identical Perſon?——If a Queen, did not her Majeſtic Mien and Carriage perſuade the enraptur'd Audience, ſhe was one?——

† Devil to pay.

‡ *Cibber's* Preface to the Provok'd Husband.

Yet juſt, nay abundantly excelling in all; did ſhe ever betray the leaſt Vanity? Did ſhe ever while under Subjection preſume to dictate to the *Managers?* ——if indeed ſhe thought herſelf at one time oppreſſed, (M,DCC,IX) and her Salary and Benefit unequal to her Deſerts, it was no more than Reaſon would admit of, to join the Reſt of the Actors at the *Haymarket*——Had ſhe more than bare Four Pounds per Week——— Did ſhe not pay for her Benefit——Yet you ſee her joining the Company at, not leading them to *Another Houſe*——— She roſe gradually, and her *Salary* was enlarged in proportion, until ſhe arrived to a *Station*, which a long Series of Deſerts produced her——I could not forbear interrupting——Sir, ſaid I, I thank you for your good Opinion and Friendſhip both here and upon Earth, but when, from this high *Æthereal* Mount, I ſurvey human Nature, I cannot withold Compaſſion——If the *Sing-Song* Girl bears any Reſemblance of Mr. *Wilks*'s Painting——if ſhe appear the Self-Sufficient——the Self-Conceited ——the Arrogant——the Inſolent—— let us impute it to the Weakneſs of her preſent State and pity her——Madam, replied

replied the *G——n——l*, I will venture to ſay, I as much compaſſionate human Frailty, as any *Manes* in theſe immenſe Regions——It is for the Pleaſure of Obſervation only, not from a Deſire of Cenſure, I ſpeak in this Strain.

If *Cenſure* is unworthy this now illuminated Society, ſaid Mrs. *Heron*, it is however in my humble Opinion, no more than can be expected by theſe *ſeceding* Gentry, our Suceſſors, from the People of their Times——To the other Foibles Mr. *Wilks* has mentioned, I muſt add another ſtill greater, that of *Covetouſneſs*——It is from that *Root of all Evil*, I much fear ſprang this Gigantic Tree of *Theatrical Diſcord*——If I miſtake not Mrs. *Heron* was proceeding, but was interrupted by *Johnny Gay*, who came up to us laughing heartily——You ſeem very merry, Sir, ſaid I,——Merry, Madam——who can be otherwiſe?——Caſt your Eyes below upon yon earthly Valley, and behold the *Pride*, both Male and Female, of thoſe, for whom many in theſe ſweet Shades have laboured——Intoxicated with the Fumes of Self-Opinion, and hurried on by a little popular

Applauſe,

Applauſe, do they not exactly Anſwer this Deſcription of my old Friend *Pope?*

* *In reas'ning Pride (my Friend) our Error lies,*
All quit their Sphere, and ruſh into the Skies;
Pride is ſtill aiming at the bleſt Abodes,
Men would be Angels, Angels would be Gods.

Sir, ſaid the *General*, I thank you for your Quotation———in my opinion it is juſt———but turn about———ſee in that Grotto, *(pointing)* ſee, Ladies, the immortal *Addiſon* alone and penſive——ſerious as Mr. *Gay* is jocoſe———that Crown of Laurels may, perhaps, be making Reflections conſonant to ours——his Eyes ſeem fixed on the ſame ſpot——Altho' freed himſelf from human Anxiety, he may be viewing with a ſincere Sorrow, the Errors of the Age he once had breathed in, and chalked out every Path of Virtue———With him indeed his *Cato* now may reſt——— *Booth*, *Wilks*,

* Eſſay on Man.

Wilks, my Charmer here, and the Reſt of this once judicious, and all-entertaining Company, tread no longer the earthly *Stage*———I wiſh, Gentlemen and Ladies, ſaid *Joe Miller*, who had hitherto continued mute, I might be permitted to ſpeak one word or two———The Subject of your Converſation———The firſt of your *Dramatis Perſonæ*, I once knew very well, and had ſome Reſpect for, when in her Infancy upon the *Stage*——I always thought her a pretty pert Laſs———I own I never thought ſhe would arrive to her preſent Ambition———but that plaguy part NELL has actually overſet the Girl———She is *metamorphoſed* indeed with a Witneſs, and fancies herſelf the real *Lady Loverule* off the Stage, ſhe repreſents on——add to this the little Gipſy's natural Temper is inclinable to be *Shrewiſh*——the Servants, her high Salary enabled her to keep, if unembodied and with us, would juſtifie my Aſſertion———God forbid I ſhould injure *Miſs* either in Thought or Speech———A pretty Joke in truth, *Miller*, for theſe *Stage-Players* to behave without Doors in the ſame manner as within, ſaid the *General*——We all admir'd Mr. WILKS in HAMLET

upon

upon the Stage, yet, I fancy, his Highneſs would not have had any Reſpect ſhewn to his Principality *off*——Nor can I think any of theſe imaginary Dignified affect the Characters of their low Parts; as much as this little Lady conceits herſelf *Loverule*; ſhe never I'll warrant, remembers the *Cobler's Wife*.——*Jubilee Dicky* upon that Bench, I preſume, would not *abroad* have coveted the Name of *Scrub*——I appeal to yourſelf, *Joe*, how you would have reliſh'd the conſtant Appellation of *Teague*——*Teague*——whatever ſecret Satisfaction, the *Committee* might have afforded you——Your Obſervation, Sir, ſaid *Miller*, is beyond all Diſpute——I'll abide by it, roſe up *Penkethman*——This *Face Judaical* is a Witneſs——Pox! could ſo good a *Chriſtian* as I was reckoned, bear to be perpetually plagued with——Look at *Mordecai*——See his *Jewiſh* Mazzard—*Pork! Pork!*—*Smouſh, Smouſh!*—No, no, of how great ſoever Service my *ſable* Countenance proved to me in the *Houſe*, I aſſure you I no ſooner got out but I dropt *the Jew of Venice*. In the Scene of Action, ſaid Mr. *Booth*, a true Player is undeniably to follow the Rules laid

laid down by our dear Friend * *Betterton*——He is then to imagine himſelf the real Perſon, whoſe Character he is exhibiting——for my own Part——whenever I play'd *Cato*, I bore conſtantly in my Mind the whole Tenour of that great *Roman*'s Actions——in the laſt dreadful Scene particularly——the whole Day before I was to appear, I always review'd *Plato* on the Immortality of the Soul, on one Side, and whatever Tract mitigated Self-Murder on the other—I always, ſaid *Jemmy Spiller*, riſing up haſtily, when I was to play a Rogue's Part, read *Johnſon*'s *Lives of the Highway-men*, yet *off* the Stage, altho' a ſad Dog, never bid one Man ſtand at the Word of Command——The whole Company, after a ſhort Laugh at poor *Spiller*'s Interruption, entreated Mr. *Booth* to proceed—When I read the former, continued Mr. *Booth*, I entertain'd the ſame Notions of Immortality as *Cato* ſeems to have done—when the latter, a Sort of Surfeit of the World—So that in my Chair, the Book and Sword on the

* See *Lives of the Players*.

Table by me, regarding not the Audience, the ſame Doubts poſſeſſed me, which made me appear almoſt the very *Cato* of *Utica*———Yet after all, at Home in my Chamber, to have pauſed on *Suicide*, would have been equally ridiculous as wicked———The Tyranny of a *Richard the* 3d., ſaid Mr. *Wilks*, is certainly confined to the *Houſe*———It ſhould be, Sir, replied the *General*,——but look down, and behold that little, elevated *Cit*——obſerve him well——Believes he not himſelf, think you, a *Roſcius*——a *Wilks*——a *Betterton*?——Elſe whence that Stiffneſs, however aukward, however unbecoming?——View his ungoverned Pride———That *young* Gentleman, Sir, ſaid *Mr. Williams*, ſeems to me greatly agitated by that almoſt univerſal Paſſion, *Love of Fame*—As yet an Infant only in the *Theatre*——Playing a few Parts well———he perſuades his ſweet ſelf, he can accompliſh all———Like the eager Hunter, who in warm Purſuit of Game, leaps over Ditches and Hedges, and runs at all to catch at it———treading the Paths of ſome of his late Predeceſſors in *Oppoſition*, the aſpiring Boy, ſcarce two Years a Subject, graſps at the *Theatrical Scep-*

tre——

tre——He would dictate——He would rule and govern——regardless of the vast Sums the *Manager* has exhausted to support the ancient Dignity of the *Stage*, and gratify his and his Confederates extravagant Salaries, he persists in making Demands yet more extravagant——Pray, Mr. *Williams*, said the *General*, is this Way of proceeding the Road to *Fame*?——I think not, Sir,——but he goes still farther——his Demands refused, he quits the Field, then *Lucifer-like* draws all he can to his Standard, and brings about the *Secession*, we at present see below so much Stir about——Alas! Alas! said old *Bowman*——that *Bowman* you had even lately a high Esteem for, and whom you knew a long Experience had render'd no bad Judge, how fallen! how miserable fallen is the *Stage*? The Props, the Props, I with Joy see here removed, could it no longer stand?——did its *Dignity* at once descend to the Dust?——was it to be metamorphosed to a *Theatre* of perpetual Contention?——

I find, said the *General*, our Observations have insensibly led us to a Consideration of the *Stage* itself——The *Actors*

have made their *Exeunt*—the laſt Act however, I believe, is not over——To begin then the Interlude ——— The *Paſſer le Temp* between———There is a viſible Analogy between a *State* and a *Stage* ———Both ſubject to Revolutio ns———If a weak Prince ſits at the Helm of the former, it is impoſſible Affairs ſhould have a right turn———it is the ſame with the latter, if a *Manager* unuſed to *Theatrical* Government takes the Reins thereof into his Hands, there is little Hopes of that *Stage*'s flouriſhing———If in the former, as in ſuch a Caſe there would moſt certainly, theſe ſhould be Malecontents, impoſing on the Weakneſs of their Sovereign, the ſame Fate would attend the latter——— if in a Part or two, no Matter in high or low Life, they ſhould chance to gain the *Plaudit* of the People, inſtantly their Salaries are inferior to their Merits, and they inſiſt upon an annual Income ſuperior to thoſe of many private Gentlemen, equal to thoſe of ſome enobled—It is to this Fatality alone I attribute that Series of *Oppoſition*, to the Intereſts and juſt Prerogatives of the reſpective *Managers* ſince the Times of you, Gentlemen and Ladies, who this Evening are favouring

me

me with your Company in the dear *Oldfield's* Grotto———When you, at leaſt ſome of you, were in the Direction———you knew your Buſineſs, and the beſt OEeconomy was the Conſequence———In the *City*, if *one* brought up from his Youth to Merchandize, and what they call a knowing, artful Man therein, ſhould with the Addition of Care and Induſtry, arrive to an opulent Fortune—Who would wonder at it?—If *another* poſſeſſed of a conſiderable Eſtate, but utterly ignorant of Trade and Commerce, ſhould engage this Eſtate therein———would not the natural Reſult be, that his own Servants, as well as thoſe he dealt with, perhaps both in Conjunction, would make uſe of every means to cheat and defraud him?—Each Cauſe produces it's Effect———

Terreſtrial Compliments are unknown in theſe bleſt Abodes, ſaid Mrs. *Barry*—whatever we ſpeak is Truth———eternal Truth———I cannot then offend——— if I pronounce this whole *Seraphick* Company obliged to the *General*——— His Sentiments are all *Adroit*———I lament with him———I lament with *Bowman* the Declenſion of the *Stage*——

yet

yet at the ſame Time, laugh with *Johnny Gay* both at Actors and Audience——I knew a Time when the *Britiſh Stage* dazzled with Luſtre——when her Reputation equall'd, if not excell'd, old *Athens*——I knew it when a *Roſcius* (curteſying to Mr. *Betterton*) trode it——when if any Difference exiſted, it was alone, which ſhould outvie the *Tragic* or the *Comic* Scene——The Audience anſwer'd——judicious,——humane,——polite,——But good God!——how are both altered ſince——*Imoinda*, *Indiana*, *Belvidera*, no longer pleaſe——* *Athenais* would now be hiſſed off the Stage——† A *Singing Chambermaid*——‡ A *Dancing Mademoiſelle*——‖ A *Bridegroom Beggar*, alone gain now Applauſe——Pantomime and Farce bear all before them——And what ſaid *Bowman* are all their Songs, if put in the Scale with one only of *Harry Purcell*'s——*Purcell*'s!——replied *Penkethman*, what were they good for?——they were *Engliſh*

* *Athenais* was Mrs. *Barry*'s Part in *Theodoſius*, or the Force of Love.

† *Intriguing Chambermaid.*

‡ Any *French* Dancer the Reader pleaſes.

‖ *Beggar's Wedding.*

Engliſh Compoſition—theſe are *Italian*, Sir, *Italian*—Your Voice, Mr. *Bowman* was too baſe——too manly for the preſent Age——their Taſte is *ha-ha-ha-a-a, do re me fa a-a*——Why the *Nobility* themſelves ſing now all *Italicé*, I aſſure you. Aye, faith, ſaid *Spiller*, and fiddle *Italicé* too my Boy,——*Count C*——plays as good a Fiddle as any of them—The more is the Pity, replied the *General*,—Sir, ſaid Mr. *Wilks*, every Nobleman is not a *Cb—rch—l*——a *Fiddle* becomes ſome of their ſoft Hands much better than a Sword——beſides, *Taſte* in Diverſions, like the Palate, varies in different Perſons——*Trahit ſua quemque Voluptas*——I grant that, Sir, replied the *General*,——but you muſt grant however, this *Taſte Italian* varies from that of the antient *Britons*——I eſteem it a vitiated Taſte, and cannot but think there is more Muſick in one of *Will Shakeſpear*'s Tragedies, than in all their *Operas* put together——The original Deſign of the *Stage*, I take it, ſaid Mr. *Mills*, was to expoſe Vice and promote Virtue——Satyr without Scurrility never failed of a kind Reception, but of late ſuch an Inundation of Immorality, Scandal and unbounded Licentiouſneſs had

over-

overwhelm'd it, that loudly call'd upon the Legiſlature for Reformation—Then you approve of *Licenſing*, Mr. *Mills*, ſaid the *General*,—Indeed I do, Sir,—Indeed, I do not, Sir, replied the *General*,—I would not have a Tax methinks laid upon *Wit*—*Wit*, Sir, ſaid *Spiller*, *(laughing heartily)* Lackaday! *Wit* like *Aſtræa* has long ſince left the *Engliſh*,—How *Jemmy*, return'd the G—*n*—*l*, who muſt be *Licenſer* then?——*Licenſer!* ſaid *Penkethman*—why *a Wit* to be ſure, who the D—v—l ſhould?—Gentlemen and Ladies, ſaid old *Johnſon*, who had not yet broke Silence, you are all mighty merry about *Wit*———pray what is *Wit?*———A Waſp, that ſtings ſhe knows not whom———where——— nor why———throws out her Vinegar without Diſtinction, on all who come in her Way———the Tympany of a windy Brain———The Company burſt out in a general Laughter at *Johnſon*'s Deſcription——-No leſs a Man than my old Name-ſake———*O Rare Ben*'s * adopted Heir, ſaid *Johnſon*, has thus defin'd it.———I hope, Mr. *Mills* will excuſe

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* Mr. *Thomas Randolph*.

Excuſe me, ſaid Mrs. *Heron*, if I differ from him in Opinion, that Scandal, that unbounded Licenciouſneſs, he complains of, I take to be only *Satyr* upon *Stateſmen* and *Courtiers*——Whoſe Actions, unable to ſtand the Teſt, were too ſeverely canvaſſed upon the *Stage*, for tho' the Characters were only Fictious, yet the Mirrour was ſo clear, as to ſhew an exact Reſemblance————Mr. *Gay*'s Opera I think is Proof ſufficient:

† *When you Cenſure the Age,*
Be cautious and ſage,
Leaſt the COURTIERS *offended ſhould be;*
If you mention Vice or Bribe,
'Tis ſo pat to all the Tribe,
Each cries that was levell'd at me.

————*Paſquin*, appearing ſome time afterward, cut the finiſhing ſtroke——As for the Immorality of the Stage——I confeſs myſelf an Enemy to it; nevertheleſs I fancy That the leaſt of Offenders——I beg, ſaid I, this Argument may be dropt, it being in my humble

† Beggars Opera.

Opinion, insignificant to us what was the Occasion——Whatever Part we in our Time acted, whatever Party we affected, is all now at an End———We will say no more, my Dear, replied the *G—n—r—l*——Pray, said Mrs. *Barry* what may the name of that Lady, sitting at Tea there with the *Sing-Song Girl*, as you call her, be?———Her Name, Madam, said Mrs. *Heron*, if I mistake not is *W******———Bless me! she is vastly like *Nell Gwin*,——she is Madam *Nell Gwin* herself, said *Spiller*, ——— how can that be? ——faith, I forgot myself, Madam——excepting a *R—y—l C—lly*———How long has she been at that House, *Spiller*?———Upon my Soul, ever since she came from *Dublin* ———Then she is not of *English* growth I find———She is a Dab at *Opposition* for all that, Madam———Pray who is that *Black* Gentleman, just now come in, paying his Congees to the Ladies? —He is my Brother *Smoush*—Madam, said Young *Penkethman*———We were very intimate, when I was among them ——We have spent many a delightful Night together at *Tom King*'s———*Tom King*'s, *Penky*, said Mr. *Wilks*,—where is his House?——Situate in a fine Place,

Sir

Sir, *Covent-Garden*—Humph! do you ſpend the Evening in good Company there?——We ſpend the *Night*, Sir, in very good——Pray what is your Brother *Smouſh*'s Name? ——*M*****, Sir,—He plays *Teague*—He play *Teague*, Sir, ſaid *Joe Miller*—Does he play it well?——— Extraordinary well for an *Iriſhman*, replied young *Penky*, yet I think Mr. *Miller* exceeded him—That's merry enough. I find then this *Seceſſion* is of the Motley Kind— Men—Women—*Engliſh*, *Iriſh*, ——and *Welſh* too I warrant ſaid *Spiller* ——I cannot ſee, continued Mr. *Wilks*, among this Band *Antient Piſtol*——what is become of that *Prig*—can any of the New-comers tell me—Sir, anſwered Mr. *Milward*, (hitherto ſilent) that ſtrutting little Hero, was one of the firſt, who brought *Oppoſition* and *Seceſſion* ſo much in vogue—it is his illuſtrious Example ſo many have follow'd——Among the reſt Mr. *Milward*; ſaid *Spiller* in his uſual dry Way——I own, replied *Milward*, that I have at Times left the reſpective *Houſes* I have belong'd to, but ſurely there is a Difference between Dividuals and Individuals——I was but One——— had Reaſons, and thoſe very cogent ones for my Proceedings——I deſired not

Others to follow me——If they were not paid enough, or ſo quick as they could have wiſhed, I always left it to their own Judgments, to move as they thought proper——I apprehend that every Man, when his Articles are expired, has an Option to continue, or go to the other Houſe—This was always my Way of thinking--without endeavouring to draw after me Others, thereby harraſſing, oppreſſing, perhaps ruining the Managers——Rot the *Managers* all, ſaid *Spiller*,——What a ſtir you make about their Intereſt——is not every Man's Intereſt his own?——Pox do they pay ſo well?——What ſignifies *large* Salaries paid in *ſmall* Sums? Faith ſometimes in none at all——Can none of you remember how often we have been put to our ſhifts?——Has not poor *Will Bullock* frequently come to me?——Ah! *Jemmy*, *Jemmy*, no *Cole* to Night—Is'nt there by G—d,—No, by G—d, replied he——then Faith *Will* we muſt burn *Wood*†,

Hold, hold, ſaid the G—*n*—*r*—*l*, who is that ſmirking, flirting *Thing* in Blue,

† A Pun upon the Treaſurer's Name.

Blue, juſt join'd their Company?——*Miſs* bridles finely in troth—She makes her Compliments *Singing* ſurely——What a toſs of the Head———Obſerve her——Who is ſhe?———The Name of that Lady Sir, anſwered Mr. *Milward* is *P******——She is a tolerable *Chambermaid* in the *Houſe*——an excellent one in *Bartholomew Fair*———Her Favourite, *Tom Salway*, inhabits theſe Regions,——I met him a few Weeks ago in that Viſta——*Tom*'s Appearance in the Character of a Footman, equall'd Mrs. *Abigail*'s———which made their Duets pleaſe the preſent *Muſical* Age,——It is ten thouſand pities then, methinks ſaid Mrs. *Barry*, ſhe had not been the *Mauxalinda* of the Heroic and Renowned *Moore of Moore-Hall*——A Character that will indeed perpetuate *Tom Salway*'s Name, and *England*'s Taſte to all Eternity——Excuſe me, Dear Madam, ſaid *Jubilee Dicky*——Mercy o'me! you conſider not the Beauties of ſo celebrated an Entertainment——Mr. *Norris* I beſeech you point them out——Oh Madam——the *Plot*—the *Poetry*—the *Diction*——Where any of them, Sir? ——*Here ſtooping to your*

Clemency

Clemency *, I beg, *Madam*, you would regard me—here is Beauty Rhapſodical,—

† *But to hear the Children mutter,*
When they had loſt their Toaſt and Butter,
And to hear my Lady moan
O—o—o—'Twould have melted a Heart of Stone.

O—O—O—Charmant!—Can *Cibber's* laurell'd ſelf outdo it?—Happy Genius! that could regale Night after Night, Thouſands with Bread and Butter from Children raviſh'd ———Pugh!——— Pugh!———you banter, *Dicky*——— will you never leave off?———I ſee no Occaſion for Banter, for my Part, ſaid *Spiller*,——It is *ſinging*——is it not?—— ſuppoſe the Words are Nonſenſe——— what ſignify the Words?———there is ſpecial *Muſick*———it is *L—mp—'s*—— Fiddle-de-dee on the Muſick, replied little *Dicky*———I ſay the Words are ſublime——I take you—— unintelligible, ſo much the better———they are all alamode now a-days——what's *Engliſh* to

* *Hamlet Prince of Denmark.*
† *Dragon of Wantley.*

to *Italian*?——what's *Gay*'s *Opera* to *Otho*?——I find, ſaid the *G—n—l*, whether we converſe in the ſerious or jocoſe Strain, our Sentiments are not widely different——I cannot enough expreſs my Concern for the univerſal Depravity of *Taſte*, now reigning among my once beloved Countrymen——I cannot withold my Compaſſion for the Pride, Self-Conceit, and extravagant Demands of the *Seceders* we have been viewing——however as it is out of our Power, from theſe remote, happy Abodes to relieve them——and as our Evening is far ſpent, if the Company approve of it, we will break up——a general Bow gave immediate Conſent, and thus the illuſtrious Company parted.

Now, my dear *Br—ce—dle*——you may perceive by this, that in theſe ſerene Shades you terreſtrial Inhabitants are often the Subjects of our Converſation——You indeed have long ſince left the *Stage* to enjoy an Anticipation of that Happineſs you may one day expect among us——It is from a ſincere Reſpect alone I addreſs to you——I know you valued me when living, and am ſatisfied

of

of your Regard for my Memory——— Should any Attempt to blaſt it, as I am brought in publick Papers, and Pamphlets again upon the *Stage*———Mrs. *Br—ce—dle* I am ſure will defend it—Your preſent Situation, Madam, affords you time for Amuſement——No doubt you ſometimes ſpend a leiſure Hour in a Manner reſembling the above——You view them I am perſuaded in the ſame Light, join then, my dear Friend, with us in Compaſſion, and bleſs that benign Being who has granted you a long *quieta* from the Trouble and Anxiety attending a Publick Life———in your private, afford now and then a commemorative Thought on her, who when you Hour of Releaſment ſhall come, will moſt ſincerely congratulate and introduce you into the Company you once affected, I am,

From the *Elyſian* Fields.
No Time in Eternity,
Adieu.

Dear Madam,

Your ever affectionate,

ANNE OLDFIELD.